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genuity of metallic construction was especially necessary; for this, as has been said, was the province in which Mr. George B. Clark's abilities were most marked. When the gearing required in the apparatus for determining the velocity of light, constructed for Professor Newcomb, proved to be soon worn out by the rapidity of revolution required, Mr. Clark succeeded in applying the necessary remedy by introducing raw hide into a certain part of the apparatus, instead of metal. Among the instruments made for Harvard College Observatory and other institutions of Cambridge and Boston, in the construction of which his skill and zeal were peculiarly advantageous, may be mentioned several large spectroscopes, photometers, and photographic instruments.

The singularly genial and kindly temperament which Mr. Clark inherited from his beloved father insured him cordial regard, and even affectionate sympathy, among a wider circle than that of his immediate relatives and associates. His face and manner bore a stamp of refinement of feeling which would not have been expected in a man whose education and whose occupations were of so exclusively practical a character. His incessant devotion to his business left him no leisure for those pursuits which are traditionally regarded as tending to promote gentleness as well as gentility; but nature had supplied him in this respect with more merit than most men can acquire by training.

He was married in 1857 to Miss J. M. Mosely, who survives him; but he left no children. Although the failure of his health had for several years been evident, his death by apoplexy on December 20, 1891, found him still busy with his work. His memory will be cherished by all who knew him, and the instruments which he planned will long testify to his skill by the scientific results which they furnish.

WILLIAM PRESCOTT DEXTER.

William Prescott Dexter was the son of Franklin Dexter and of Elizabeth, daughter of Judge William Prescott. He came of distinguished ancestry. His great-grandfather on the mother's side commanded the American troops at Bunker Hill. The historian William Hickling Prescott was his uncle. His grandfather, Samuel Dexter, was an eminent statesman. Both his grandfathers were members of this Academy, and they held high rank as lawyers, as did his father also. All of them were prominent citizens. So too was his distant kinsman, Aaron Dexter, M.D., likewise a member of this Academy, who held the Chair of Chemistry and Materia Medica in Harvard College from 1783 to 1816, and was thenceforth Professor Emeritus until his death in 1829.

When thirteen years old, William P. Dexter passed from the Boston Latin School to Harvard College, and was graduated thence in 1838, and from the Harvard Medical School in 1842. He established himself as a practising physician, first in Boston and then in Brookline, and devoted himself to this profession during a number of years. In 1847 he married Margaret Austin, daughter of William Austin, lawyer and essayist, always to be remembered in American literature as the author of " Peter Rugg, the Missing Man."

The following sketch of Dexter's after life has been furnished by his friend, Dr. William J. Russell, of London.

William Prescott Dexter was born at Boston, on the 10th of December, 1820. He studied medicine at Harvard College, and graduated in 1838. After leaving college, he practised medicine at Brookline for a few years, but his strong interest in pure science and his longing to devote himself solely to scientific pursuits made him feel the irksomeness of the ordinary routine of a medical practitioner's life, and induced him to give up the medical profession, and to go abroad in order to study chemistry. From this time to the end of his life he devoted himself entirely to the prosecution of that science. His interest in and devotion to chemistry never flagged, and although he did not reside permanently in any one place, but lived in different parts of Germany, in England, and occasionally returned to America for a short time, still his one great interest in life was the study of chemistry, and wherever he settled for any length of time he always had a laboratory. Few there are who have devoted their lives so entirely to science simply for its own sake. No desire for place or for emolument stimulated Dexter's love for chemistry; it was a pure desire to increase knowledge and to learn with rigorous accuracy the true nature of the phenomena he was interested in. In organic chemistry he took comparatively little interest; the theoretical conceptions which play so important a part in this branch of chemistry he was loath to admit, and he did not sufficiently believe in them to be interested by them; but it was in inorganic chemistry, and especially in the analytical branch of the science, that his whole interest was centred. Rose's Analytical Chemistry was ever a book of fascinating interest to him. He studied it when in America, when he had little or no means of carrying out its precepts, and it was this book which induced him to give up his professional career and go to Germany, and it was to

Rose's laboratory in Berlin that he first went. Even before leaving America, and while still in practice, he revised and published in 1850, in a separate form, the tables for the calculation of analyses which were appended to Rose's work. This entailed a very considerable amount of labor; for the tables were most thoroughly revised, and nothing but the most perfect accuracy would satisfy him; and he tells us in the Preface, that "every calculation was performed by myself both by direct division and by the use of logarithms." Also extraordinary care seems to have been taken to avoid all errors of the press.

After working for some length of time in Berlin, Dexter went to Göttingen and worked in Wöhler's laboratory, and from Göttingen he went to Heidelberg. Here he worked for about twelve months in Professor Bunsen's laboratory, and it was during this time that he carried out his most important published work, his determination of the atomic weight of antimony, which was published in 1857. This work was admirably carried out. The writer well remembers the care and thought bestowed upon it, how every possible error he could conceive of was considered and eliminated, and the wonderful accuracy with which the manipulation was performed. The method first tried was the simple one of precipitating the antimony by gold; but this method was found to give inaccurate results, and was abandoned, and the direct oxidation of the metal substituted. Other chemists were working on the same subject at this time, two of them, Dumas and Kessler, obtaining results very nearly agreeing with Dexter's number, 122.34; but Schneider obtained the number 120.3. These researches led to the adoption at that time of the number 122.0. Since then further researches have been made. Cooke in 1880 published a very elaborate and thorough investigation of the matter. Other investigators and other distinct methods have confirmed the lower number, and 120 is now generally adopted as the true atomic weight of antimony. At the same time, it is difficult to see where the error, if there be one, crept into Dexter's experiments. All the papers which Dexter published related to analytical chemistry, some appearing in Poggendorf's Annalen, and some in the Proceedings of the American Academy and in the American Journal of Science. His interest and his special ability lay in analytical chemistry. He was one of the most perfect manipulators who have ever lived; the precision and accuracy with which he performed the different processes of analysis were astonishing. Every step was thought out, and then performed as carefully and intelligently as possible. Of late years the discovery of a perfect method, and consequently one of general application, for the estimation of phosphoric acid, engrossed entirely Dexter's attention, and for many years he was considering and experimenting on this subject. The subject had an extraordinary fascination for him. No difficulties, and he met with many, could daunt him, and he has left behind much work of a very interesting and high kind on this subject. At last he seems to have discovered a method which would satisfy even his exacting requirements, but unfortunately he did not live to complete his work. The introduction to it he had worked out, in the form of a most rigorous examination of the methods now in use, and the degree of accuracy of which they are susceptible, but the completion of his method remains unfinished. During the last few years of his life he settled in Leamington, England, and led there a peaceful life, making the best room of his house into a laboratory, and devoting himself to the study of analytical chemistry, and amusing himself with some practical problems in higher mathematics. He died on the 8th of November, 1890.

Papers by William Prescott Dexter.

1. Renal Calculus. Passage through the Ureter, assisted by the Use of Ether. Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, 1849, XL. 219.
2. Tabulæ Atomicæ: The Chemical Tables for the Calculation of Quantitative Analyses of H. Rose. Recalculated for the more recent Determinations of Atomic Weights, and with other Alterations and Additions, by William P. Dexter. Boston, 1850, 8vo, pp. 70.
3. Ueber die Trennung der Thonerde vom Chromoxyd. Poggendorf's Annalen, 1853, LXXXIX. 142.
4. Ueber die Trennung der Wolframsaeure vom Zinnoxyd. Poggendorf's Annalen, 1854, XCII. 335.
5. [Analysis of Polyhalit.] Reported by H. Rose, Bericht der Akademie der Wissenschaft zu Berlin. 1854, p. 412.
6. Ueber das Atomgewicht des Antimons. Poggendorf's Annalen, 1857, C. 563.
7. On the Double Salts of Cyanide of Mercury. Proceedings of the American Academy, V. 355. (9 Dec., 1861.)
8. Remarks upon the recent Determinations of the Atomic Weight of Antimony. Proc. Amer. Acad., V. 359. (14 Jan., 1862.)
9 On the Aluminates of Baryta. Proc. Amer. Acad., VI. 97. (28 Jan., 1863.)
10. Obituary Notice of Heinrich Rose. Proc. Amer. Acad., 24 May, 1864, VI. 312.
11. On the Preparation of Hydrofluoric Acid. American Journal of Science, 1866, [2.], XLII. 110.

12. New Chemical Apparatus. American Journal of Science, 1868, [2.], XLVI. 51.
13. On the Sulphates of Oxide of Antimony. American Journal of Science, 1868, [2.], XLVI. 78.
14. Obituary Notice of Dr. Augustus Matthiessen. American Journal of Science, 1871, [3.], I. 73.

THOMAS STERRY HUNT.

The subject of this notice, whose death occurred in New York City, February 12, 1892, made extensive contributions to American science, and has permanently identified his name with its progress and development. Choosing two of the most rapidly advancing sciences, chemistry and geology, as his field of work, and studying these especially in their intimate and extensive interactions, he had a large and honorable share in giving form to our present knowledge upon these subjects. Although an indefatigable experimenter and an extensive observer, Dr. Hunt was also eminently an original and philosophic thinker, and took an influential part in the establishment of the most matured scientific theories.

Thomas Sterry Hunt was born in Norwich, Conn., on September 5, 1826. His ancestor, William Hunt, was one of the founders of Concord, Mass., in 1635. His maternal grandfather, Consider Sterry, of Norwich, was a civil engineer and mathematician, and was the author of text-books of arithmetic and algebra published one hundred years ago.

While the subject of this sketch was a child, the family moved to Poughkeepsie on the Hudson. There the father died when Thomas, the oldest son, was twelve; and the mother returned with her family of six young children to the old home in Connecticut. For a short time Thomas attended the public school; but it was for a short time only, as he thus early was required to share the burden of the family support, and to seek employment.

At that time his intention was to study medicine. Under the counter of the store in which he was employed he kept a skeleton, as well as his home-made chemical apparatus. Two local physicians assisted the brilliant boy, thus educating himself, by the loan of books.

In 1845 he went to New Haven during the meeting of the Association of Naturalists and Geologists, and obtained work as a reporter on a New York paper. But a more important issue of this trip was a visit to the elder Silliman, whom the boy had met in Norwich after